

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON



July 9, 1946.

SECRET

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

From: S. K. [redacted]

Subject: JIOA

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Zook DATE 3/18/81
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Pursuant to a telephone arrangement I made yesterday, Mr. Robert Fry, Assistant to Mr. John Green, in the Department of Commerce, called on me this morning. At my invitation, Mr. Saxton Bradford of FC was present. Mr. Fry had told me yesterday that Mr. Green had gone to Europe.

I explained to Mr. Fry that while we knew about the Commerce program, we had had no contact with Commerce directly; that we were engaged in drawing up something for the President which would be a written precis of the requirements for immigration (I referred to "limited number" question); and I said that I thought it would be well to make sure that none of the problems of the Commerce program were foreclosed by having the President committed in writing to some program which did not take account of the Commerce situation. Mr. Fry said that he had been in touch with Mr. Knight of the Visa Division and was constantly in touch with Captain Wey of JIOA. He indicated that his instructions were to clear applications through Wey. He mentioned a Mr. Ervin Anderson of Mr. Clayton's office as someone who had been in touch with Commerce on this program from the beginning. He himself said he had only been with the Government for a brief period having come in from industry. He said he understood our position with respect to the responsibility of the Visa authorities.

I asked Mr. Fry to tell us the sequence of events with respect to the Commerce program, on the assumption that he might make that Mr. Bradford and I were ignorant of all except the directive itself. Mr. Fry replied

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that the first entry in his file was a memorandum written by Secretary Wallace to the President in about December, 1945, and indicated that Secretary Wallace might have been involved in this matter considerably earlier than December. The file shows that Secretary Wallace wrote a follow-up memorandum to the President; that there had been an informal discussion but nothing in writing from the President, and that thereafter, Secretary Byrnes wrote a formal letter to Secretary Wallace asking Commerce to undertake the civilian program which Wallace, in writing, agreed to do. Mr. Fry said at several times that Secretary Wallace had been unaware of the denial aspects and that that had been brought to his attention by Mr. Fry only recently after Fry's conversations with Wey. He said also that Wallace, in his reply to Byrnes, had asked for de-classification in order that negotiations could take place with private industry. In the meantime about twenty-five firms which had heard about this matter had written in asking for information, etc. He said that Commerce has not interviewed any scientists, although Assistant Secretary Clayton had written a letter approving the idea. However, Mr. Fry believes that the Air Corps at Wright Field has had the Germans there interviewed by one or more Air Corps contractors.

As a test run, Commerce is submitting today to Captain Wey the names of four persons for investigation by the Army in Germany. One is a Miss Braun who is wanted by the Institute for Advanced studies at Princeton; in this case Fry said he had suggested to the Institute that Miss Braun, who is a mathematician, be tied up with the Navy program. The other three are color photography specialists who have been asked for, by name, by Remington Rand. Of these three, Fry said, two are now known to be missing although they were at work in the I.G. Farben plant some time ago. In connection with the Remington Rand matter, Fry said further, that the company had agreed to accept all the conditions imposed by Commerce, such as general publicity research, patents, etc.

Mr. Fry said that individual firms are afraid to make requests for individual persons although they know who they want by name because they are afraid of publicity. The Business Advisory Council of the Department of Commerce has been kept fully aware of this program and discussions have taken place with various members of the Council, and Mr. Thorpe and Mr. Clayton of the

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State Department. He said there was some difference of opinion in the Council as to whether we should bring in well-established old men, or young people who have not yet established themselves. He himself is definitely opposed to the latter idea, especially for security reasons. He mentioned also that several persons whom they might want are disqualified for security reasons, such as Dr. Reppe, chief German scientist in acetylene research at I. G. Farben (acetylene is a subject in which the Germans are far ahead of us). He said Reppe was very much a Nazi but had been exploited already in England and anyhow did not want to come to the United States.

Mr. Fry said several times that Commerce never had in mind more than 50 people at the maximum and would be satisfied with a dozen top people. He said that as a technician himself he believed that it was nonsense to talk about bringing over 1,000 people since, he said, the great scientists would not exceed 100 or thereabouts, and the same would be true, he said, for the United States. However, from the denial program point of view the Russians could match in their zone one for every one in our zone.

Mr. Fry also stated that Colonel Osborne of FIAT had told him that research had been started again in Germany under our supervision except in prohibited categories. At this point Bradford volunteered the statement that inspection teams were now visiting laboratories, etc. in Germany to enforce prohibitionists. Mr. Fry admitted, however, that among the Germans who would be wanted for the United States there would be some who would be engaged in prohibited research--he mentioned someone wanted in the University of Chicago to work in nuclear physics.

I pointed out to Mr. Fry that the limitations and high standards of the Commerce program might be evaded by means of the Army and Navy program. Mr. Fry took the view that Captain Wey had told him that the Army and Navy were not really interested in exploitation. He finally stated that he saw the loophole in question but apparently was not impressed that it was one which was now being used.

Mr. Fry, early in the conversation, called attention to an article in the Washington Daily News of

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July 5, 1946, in which he said represented a disclosure of the whole program. He said he had received a telephone call from a newspaper man asking for further information and that he had replied that while the document was restricted, nevertheless, he had no authority to discuss it. The newspaper man told him that he had the information he wanted to make sure there were no mistakes. I have the impression that Mr. Fry had referred the newspaper man to SWNCC or to JIOA. In any event, we called for the article and Mr. Fry said he thought the man who called him was the man whose name was on the article--Earl Richert.

After the meeting was over I called Flinn and told him the foregoing, especially the number limitation of the Commerce program. Flinn expressed gratification.

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